



IOWA COUNCIL FOR EARLY ACCESS

Minutes

January 20, 2006

10 a.m. –2 p.m.

Des Moines Botanical Center

909 Robert D. Ray Drive

Des Moines, IA 50316

(515) 323-6290

Members attending

Cathy Ryba – Chair

Troy McCarthy – Vice Chair

Kyla Alba

Robert Bacon

Glenn Baughman

Scott Beall

Mary Jane Brotherson

Nick Burnett

LaMark Combs

Michael Fay

Glenn Grove

Kelly Hancock

Jan Mackey

Barbara Merrill

Royann Mraz

Carolyn Nelson

Debra Sixta

Carrie Soddors

Greg Titus

Jim Overland

Members Excused

Angela Burke Boston

Jane Borst

Jeff Lobas

Lana Michelson

Pamela Parker

Maureen Schletzbaum

Staff Attending

Julie Curry

LauraBelle Sherman-Proehl

Kelly Schulte

Michael Baldwin

Dee Gethmann

Call to Order/Approval of Minutes/Attendance

Chair Cathy Ryba brought the meeting to order. The minutes were approved as mailed. There was a quorum.

Family Story Scott Beall

Member Scott Beall presented the story of his family. A dialogue regarding system strengths and needed improvements followed.

Committee Updates: Cathy Ryba, Chair.

Executive:

Governor's Report:

The 6-year State Performance Plan fulfills the requirement of providing an annual report to the Governor. This gives the Council an opportunity to determine what and how to communicate to the Governor about 2004-05 Council Activities and the Early ACCESS system. The Executive Committee shared their ideas for framing the messages, including describing how Early ACCESS fits in with larger early childhood efforts that he is promoting during 2006 Legislative Session.

Council Members recommended the council provide a user-friendly report that educates the Governor, Legislators and stakeholders including:

- Updated data (2004-05).
- Share the challenges we are experiencing.
- How it fits into the larger early childhood.
- How EA contributes to Desired Results for Children, birth to five.
- Using EA as a model for interagency collaboration to get desired results and be good stewards of state and federal funds.

Public Policy Committee Update. Mary Jane Brotherson

The Committee received a tutorial from member Shanell Wagler about the legislative process this morning, so the committee can operate efficiently and effectively during the 2006 Iowa Legislative Session. The Committee wants to facilitate the Council in identify priorities of state and federal legislative actions to track in order to better advise and assist the Lead and Signatory Agencies about policy issues.

Presentation re Iowa Legislative Session Pertinent to Early Childhood Issues – Shanell Wagler and guest Dee Gethmann, Iowa Department of Education.

Shanell Wagler described the process for the development of the Governor's Budget and Legislative Agenda. After the Governor's Office makes final decisions, their agenda is communicated through a number of documents. The early childhood portion of his agenda is written in the document: ***"Iowa's Strong Start: An Innovative Approach to the Delivery of Supports for Children, Birth to Age 5 (Spring 2006)." Page one contains an executive summary. Important contacts are listed on pages 2-5.***

The Governor's agenda focuses on eight early childhood initiatives/programs. The document provides a description of each with 1) Goal Statement; 2) Overview; 3) Key Activities for System Building; 4) Research; and 5) Data.

- ***Voluntary Access to Quality Preschools For All Four Year Olds – pages 6-16.*** Dee Gethmann, Early Childhood Consultant from the Iowa Department of Education, provided information about the initiative, which is supported by the State Board of Education. The goal of this initiative is to improve voluntary access to quality preschool programming for four-year-olds statewide.
- ***Coordinated and funded Early Care, Health and Education System – page 16.*** Shanell provided information about Community Empowerment and the direction in which they want to go (page 17). It was acknowledged that all the different early childhood programs, their names and agencies, financing, organization, etc. is confusing. Empowerment wants to spend

time getting more organized; improve understanding; identify gaps and duplications; and make recommendations for coordination. The Governor is asking for state funds to support these activities for one year.

- **Family Support and Parent Education Coordination – pages 17-19.** Goal of this initiative is to improve the coordination and collaboration of family support and parent education programs at a system/state level. There is a need for programs to receive technical assistance and to consistently provide quality services.
- **Iowa Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) – pages 20-23.** There is a need to build a more effective system to support access to dentistry services for young children. Proposed to be coordinated through Iowa Department of Public Health. State funds are being sought to support this infrastructure building.
- **Healthy Mental Development – pages 24-28.** Goal is to elevate the social and emotional well being as an integral part of a child's healthy mental development in the Early Care Health and Education System. State funds are needed to improve use of EPSDT of Medicaid Program that would improve that part of the system. One parent member talked about how important that program is to her family and to keep it funded. Members who are providers of those services talked about some of the difficulties in operations of that program.
- **Quality Rating System – pages 29-32.** Goal is to expand critical infrastructure, technical assistance and provider supports to increase the participation in and the integrity of Iowa's Quality Rating System. This is voluntary on the part of home and center-based child care providers, and there are different requirements for home and center programs. The training available to providers will improve the quality of the programs. The rating system is intended to help families be better consumers of the types and quality of childcare programs they are seeking and using.
- **Iowa Community Empowerment - page 33-34.** Are asking for continuation of state funds (no additional funds) in order to provide more technical assistance to communities and continue work in the early childhood system development.
- **Shared Visions – page 35-37.** Goal is continued funding for Shared Visions preschool and parent support programs.

Council members discussed effective ways to understand legislator's interest and concerns as well as ways to educate legislators.

- How can Council members communicate which programs are helpful to children and families need continued funding? Guidance is needed about how members identify themselves (as citizens, as representatives of the Council, our parent or professional role, etc.). Cathy Ryba, as Chair, has the authority to speak/communicate on behalf of the Council.
- Recommendation: Parents attend local caucuses, coffees, etc. with local legislators is a very effective method. Ask them "What are your beliefs about state funding of early childhood?"
- Emphasized the importance of talking about Early ACCESS and other favorite programs *within* the larger early childhood system and how that is good for Iowa.
- The Council needs to attend to both state and federal funding issues. It was noted that Iowa does not provide state funds designated for early intervention (Early ACCESS) - A majority of states do.
- Council members need Talking Points to use in communication with Legislators. Requested Talking Points about the resources each of Signatory Agencies depend upon. Need a

consistent message and language that is specific to the legislator's or political parties' interests.

- Identify key legislators who would affect legislation and appropriations and match them with Council members who live in their districts. See page 2-5 which provides the name of Legislators.
- Governor's Report could be written and distributed to legislators as well as Governor. Include that an appointment of a Legislator to this Council is needed (since our past representative recently resigned).
- Timely communication among Council members will be important in order for Council to respond during critical decision-making times.
- Shanell Wagler is available to provide informational resources the Committee and Council might need.

The Chair of the *Public Policy Committee*, Mary Jane Brotherson, summarized next steps:

- Ask Council members for their top legislative priorities, why it is important to them, etc.
- Refine key message and Talking Points.
- Communicate with Council members so they can plan to contact legislators.

Lunch: The *Public Policy, Parent, Membership, and Governor's Report* Committees met over the lunchtime.

Public Policy Committee Follow-Up

The Public Policy Committee recommended a two-prong approach to public policy action, which was approved by the Council:

Short Term Plan: Draft two letters. 1) Council's response to Iowa's ***Strong Start*** proposal. Intended audience is key legislators. Mary-Jane Brotherson will draft; and 2) Council's response to federal Medicaid legislation, especially EPSDT. Send to all Iowa Delegation (Senators and Representatives). Executive Committee will finalize the letters at February 8th meeting and send on behalf of the Council.

Long Term Plan – Prepare to position Council for public policy action. At March 17th and future meetings, identify Council's key beliefs related to policy agendas. Discuss ways a diverse membership can have common ground and move forward.

Feedback to the Committee will be important. Council members will need to check their email frequently for timely response to drafts.

Sharing:

Shanell Wagler – Day on The Hill is a special early childhood day at the Iowa Capitol, Wednesday, February 8th. Opportunity to learn about early childhood programs in the state and opportunity to meet with your legislators.

Debra Sixta – Reported difficulty with referral process and multiple attempts did not result in a successful connection with the local Early ACCESS program.

Greg Titus – 60% of children seen at local Child Health Specialty Clinic (CHSC) were affected by drugs. It is still a big problem. He also encountered a problem with the referral process involving a local Area Education Agency.

Bob Bacon – Reflected on his six years as a Council member and commented he was glad to see new members coming on board and stepping into leadership roles.

Glenn Baughman – There is a resource that has been untapped. _____

Carolyn Nelson – There will be more guidance coming from the IDPH about Title V's role in service coordination. This is needed by local agencies and will help with standardization of the system.

Kelly Schulte – Passed out copies of brochure from Early Childhood Iowa, "Growing Our Youngest Iowans." This can be shared with legislators and the public about needed early childhood system improvements. www.EarlyChildhoodIowa.org.

Mike Baldwin - The federal Medicaid law requires, "beginning July 1st this year, all Medicaid recipient and applicants will have to show proof of citizenship." This validation process will be a significant burden on the system as well as to the recipient and applicants. Families will have to find and show birth certificates, passports, or driver licenses in states that require citizenship. If this law passes, Iowa will need revised administrative rules.

Scott Beall: Thanked the Council for energizing him today and encouraged the Council to continue their work on behalf children and families – "Be their voice."

Jim Overland: Reflected that he represents not only the Iowa Department of Human Services, but also parents - his 14-year old son was born prematurely.

Mary Jane Brotherson – Will be attending a Family Support Summit in Kansas sponsored by the Beach Center. She will bring back information about it to the Council. Early ACCESS Parent Consultant, Lisa Sharp, will also attending.

Barb Merrill – passed out Every Child Counts brochures and membership forms. Every Child Counts is an advocacy network for children and families.

Corrections for ICEA Directory:

1. Glenn Baughman's address has changed to:

Child Guidance
808 5th Street
Des Moines IA 50309
(515) 244-2267

2. Early ACCESS Staff, Kelly Schulte, phone number is (515) 281-8284.

Meeting Adjourned. The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m. do to accumulating snow.

The **next meeting** will be March 17, 2006 at the Oak Room of the Des Moines Botanical Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Council Member Dr. Dan Elsberry and guests will present on children born prematurely, their long-term outcomes and the supports needed. This will be an opportunity to learn about High Risk Follow Up programs in Iowa and how our system needs to improve in order to better serve the children and their families.